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SALT: CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

The first round of SALT TWO ended on 21 December with both sides standing firm on their differing views of the offensive systems to be included in further offensive arms limitation agreements. The Soviets made a particularly strong effort in the closing days to ensure that the US comes to the next round prepared to discuss a method for limiting MIRVs--a subject which the US has indicated it considers an open one. Soviet interest in curtailing deployment of bomber carried ASMs was also evident. There was evidence of friction among the Soviets, possibly generated by difficulties in arriving at an acceptable negotiating position for this round. In expressing opposition to limitations on air defenses, several Soviet delegation members indicated that China weighs very much on the Soviet mind in this respect. The two sides signed a memorandum of understanding establishing the Standing Consultative Commission called for by the ABM treaty, and agreed to resume SALT TWO in Geneva on 27 February.

1. The first round of SALT TWO recessed on 21 December after five weeks. Both sides used the final sessions to restate their positions--the US urging negotiation of limits on central systems alone, the Soviets asking for a treaty which is based on the terms of the interim agreement and which takes into account other systems which the Soviets consider to be strategic, such as forward based nuclear delivery systems.

2. Minister Semenov reiterated Soviet proposals on FBS in the plenary session on 18 December. These include the withdrawal of strategic offensive systems and the dismantling of bases in third countries; withdrawal of SLBM submarines beyond agreed limits and liquidation of their bases in third countries; withdrawal of attack carriers beyond agreed limits and the counting of all carrier based aircraft as strategic; and the withdrawal

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to their national territories of all nuclear delivery aircraft and any nuclear missiles capable of striking the other side.

3. Outside of the plenary sessions, however, the Soviets pressed the matter of qualitative improvement of strategic systems, in a manner obviously designed to stimulate US consideration between rounds. Two issues particularly singled out were ASMs and MIRVs with the latter given particular urgency. Brezhnev himself underscored the Soviet position by specifically endorsing "the establishment of certain limits on... qualitative improvements in strategic arms" in his keynote speech on the USSR's 50th anniversary on 21 December.

The Problem of MIRV

25X1A 4. Both Grinevsky and Shchukin stressed to [] on separate occasions the need to find a solution to the MIRV question. Grinevsky emphasized the need for both sides to give serious attention to the issue between rounds, and Shchukin stated strongly that the most important thing was to begin discussions on possible limitations regardless of the verification problems involved. He said that the idea of limitations through a quota on missile flight tests would not be acceptable to the Soviet Union since US MIRV systems are already developed. In a manner suggesting a coordinated effort, both pointed out that three possibilities existed: a total MIRV ban, no MIRV restrictions, or something in between, which both seemed to favor. Shchukin raised the possibility of leveling off MIRV deployment without exploiting the full potential for MIRVing. Grinevsky suggested allowing MIRVs on some missiles and not on others and, prodded by [], acknowledged that he was thinking of something like permitting MIRVs on SS-11s but not on SS-9s.

25X1A 5. The substantial problem of verification was discussed at some length in both cases, but the primary objectives of the approaches were apparently to make certain the US was aware of the importance Moscow attached to the issue and to stimulate US thinking on possible approaches.

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The ASM Issue

6. Semenov, Grinevsky and Trusov used different occasions to stress the importance Moscow attaches to limitations on ASMs. After the 12 December meeting, Semenov stressed to Smith the great significance of the ASM issue and alleged that ASM development, testing and deployment would be destabilizing. On 19 December Grinevsky played down the Soviet proposal on banning bombers from carrying nuclear weapons, but he alleged that the proposal to ban strategic missiles on bombers was a different story and should be carefully considered. In discussing the same proposal with Col. FitzGerald, General Trusov said that it was meant to ban bombers from carrying ballistic missiles of all types, even if they had a range of only 10-20 kilometers--an interpretation which would specifically include SRAM. This interpretation was at variance with one given earlier by Shchukin, who said the proposal was meant to cover only long range air carried ballistic missiles.

Interim Measures

25X1A 7. Perhaps reflecting the wide disparity between the positions of the two sides on basic issues, the Soviets have recently muted the interest they expressed initially in having some interim measures agreed on prior to a permanent offensive agreement. Grinevsky raised the issue again, however, in his 19 December discussion with [REDACTED]. He specifically suggested early agreement on a ban on strategic nuclear systems on territorial seabeds and inland waters--which Semenov had suggested that both sides consider early in the talks--and a ban on intercontinental cruise missiles. Garthoff provided no encouragement on US willingness to consider these two marginal proposals for an interim understanding.

Indications of Disagreement on the Soviet Side

8. There have been several unusual references recently to frictions both on the delegation and in Moscow by members of the Soviet delegation. On 16 December Semenov expressed his aggravation to

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[] over the strong US statement the day before on the FBS issue. He indicated that such polemics only gave grist to the "hard heads" on his side--whom he implied existed both on the delegation and in Moscow--and said he had to "suppress" more polemical drafts of his own counterstatement.

9. In his conversation with Col. FitzGerald two days later, Trusov expressed his dislike for diplomatic duty, but said that the Soviet military members of the delegation are disciplined people who follow their instructions. He added, however, that he could not say the same of "the diplomats and one or two other people." Shchukin had earlier commented to Nitze that there were differences of view on the Soviet side. He said there were influential people both in the delegation and at home who did not understand "the strategic realities."

10. Disagreement has also been apparent in more subtle ways, such as the obvious lack of enthusiasm of some Soviet delegation members for some of the Soviet proposals, particularly the one banning nuclear armed bombers. In discussing this proposal with [] Skoptsov would say only that "there were certain proposals that the military insisted on."

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11. Whether this apparent friction is due to the unhappiness of some elements in the delegation over having to put forward a "maximalist" position at this round, or whether it is a result of disagreement in Moscow over the elements to be included in the Soviet negotiating package is uncertain. It may well be a combination of both, but it seems at least to indicate that the present Soviet proposals were not easily arrived at.

Bombers, Bomber Defenses and the Issue of China

12. The US side has argued strongly against the Soviet proposal to ban bombers from carrying nuclear weapons. It has also argued that if bomber armaments are to be discussed, then bomber defenses must also be discussed. The Soviets have disputed this and in doing so have made several not very oblique references to the consideration of China in Soviet thinking on bomber defenses.

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13. Shchukin told Nitze and Brown that it was essential from the Soviet standpoint to have defenses against bombers "of third countries," which might attack Soviet population centers with conventional weapons. He indicated that it might be difficult to phase out older weapons systems because of "the third country problem and not just NATO." In discussing bomber defenses with Col. FitzGerald, Col. Starodubov also made reference to the third country problem.

14. In the same conversation with FitzGerald, Col. Budantsev protested that bombers were obsolete and that the Soviet proposals on them envisaged their "withering away." In response to FitzGerald's question, he said the USSR was not deploying a new heavy bomber to replace the TU-95 and in fact had no plans to deploy a new heavy bomber.

The SCC

15. On 21 December, Smith and Semenov signed the memorandum of understanding establishing the Standing Consultative Commission, as called for by Article XIII of the ABM treaty. The purpose of the SCC is to promote the objectives and implementation of the SALT agreements, including the establishment of dismantling and destruction procedures where appropriate. The memorandum provided for each side to be represented by a commissioner, deputy commissioner, and staff, and for the two sides to meet no less than two times per year. The commission is to meet in Geneva but will also have the flexibility to meet elsewhere.

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